



Ohio Revised Code

Section 4927.13 Lifeline service for eligible residential customers.

Effective: September 29, 2017

Legislation: House Bill 49 - 132nd General Assembly

(A) An incumbent local exchange carrier that is an eligible telecommunications carrier under 47 C.F.R. 54.201 shall implement lifeline service throughout the carrier's traditional service area for its eligible residential customers.

(1) Lifeline service shall consist of all of the following:

(a) Monthly access line service at a recurring discount to the monthly basic local exchange service rate that provides for the maximum contribution of federally available assistance;

(b) Not more than once per customer at a single address in a twelve-month period, a waiver of all nonrecurring service order charges for establishing service;

(c) Free blocking of toll service, 900 service, and 976 service.

The carrier may offer to lifeline service customers any other services and bundles or packages of services at the prevailing prices, less the lifeline discount.

(2) The carrier also shall offer special payment arrangements to lifeline service customers that have past due bills for regulated local service charges, with the initial payment not to exceed twenty-five dollars before service is installed, and the balance for regulated local service charges to be paid over six, equal, monthly payments. Lifeline service customers with past due bills for toll service charges shall have toll restricted service until the past due toll service charges have been paid or until the customer establishes service with another toll service provider.

(3)(a) Every incumbent local exchange carrier required to implement lifeline service under division (A) of this section shall establish an annual marketing budget for promoting lifeline service and performing outreach regarding lifeline service. All funds allocated to this budget shall be spent for the promotion and marketing of lifeline service and outreach regarding lifeline service and only for



those purposes and not for any administrative costs of implementing lifeline service. All activities relating to the promotion of, marketing of, and outreach regarding lifeline service shall be coordinated through a single advisory board composed of staff of the public utilities commission, the office of the consumers' counsel, consumer groups representing low-income constituents, two representatives from the Ohio association of community action agencies, and, except as provided in division (A)(3)(b) of this section, every incumbent local exchange carrier required to implement lifeline service under division (A) of this section. The public utilities commission may review and approve decisions of the advisory board in accordance with commission rules, including decisions on how the lifeline marketing, promotion, and outreach activities are implemented.

(b) Division (A)(3)(a) of this section does not apply to an incumbent local exchange carrier with fewer than fifty thousand access lines.

(4) All other aspects of the carrier's state-specific lifeline service shall be consistent with federal requirements.

(B) The rates, terms, and conditions for the carrier's lifeline service shall be tariffed in the manner prescribed by rule adopted by the public utilities commission.

(C)(1) Eligibility for lifeline service under division (A) of this section shall be based on either of the following criteria:

(a) An individual's verifiable participation in any federal or state low-income assistance program, specified in rules adopted by the commission, that limits assistance based on household income;

(b) Other verification that an individual's household income is consistent with the income eligibility threshold in 47 C.F.R. 54.409(a)(1).

The public utilities commission shall adopt rules establishing requirements for the implementation of automatic enrollment of eligible individuals for lifeline assistance. The public utilities commission shall work with the appropriate state agencies that administer federal or state low-income assistance programs and with carriers to negotiate and acquire information necessary to verify an individual's eligibility and the data necessary to automatically enroll eligible individuals for lifeline service.



Every incumbent local exchange carrier required to implement lifeline service under division (A) of this section shall implement automatic enrollment in accordance with the applicable rules of the public utilities commission and to the extent that appropriate state agencies are able to accommodate the automatic enrollment.

(2) The carrier shall provide written notification if the carrier determines that an individual is not eligible for lifeline service and shall provide the individual an additional thirty days to prove eligibility.

(3) The carrier shall provide written customer notification if a customer's lifeline service is to be terminated due to failure to submit acceptable documentation for continued eligibility for that assistance and shall provide the customer an additional thirty days to submit acceptable documentation of continued eligibility or dispute the carrier's findings regarding termination of the lifeline service.

(D) An incumbent local exchange carrier required to implement lifeline service under division (A) of this section may recover from end users of the carrier's telecommunications service other than lifeline service customers, by a method approved by the public utilities commission, any lifeline service discounts and any other lifeline service expenses that the public utilities commission prescribes by rule and that are not recovered through federal or state funding, except for expenses incurred under division (A)(3)(a) of this section. A carrier seeking recovery of discounts or expenses shall, in accordance with rules adopted by the public utilities commission, apply to the public utilities commission for approval of the method of recovery. If the method of recovery includes a customer billing surcharge, the public utilities commission shall prescribe by rule how the surcharge is to be identified on customer bills.

(E) Every incumbent local exchange carrier required to implement lifeline service under division (A) of this section shall annually file with the public utilities commission a report that identifies the number of its customers who receive, at the time of the filing of the report, lifeline service.